DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 860 PS 015 065

AUTHOR Barnett, Rosalind C.; Baruch, Grace K.
TITLE Mothers' Participation in Child Care: Patterns and Consequences. Working Paper No. 137.
INSTITUTION Wellesley Coll., Mass. Center for Research on Women.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Mental Health (DHHS), Bethesda, Md.
PUB DATE 84
GRANT NIMH-MH-34225
NOTE 48p.; For related working papers, see PS 015 064-PS 015 066. Additional funding was provided by the Henry A. Murray Center, Radcliffe College.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Rearing; Comparative Analysis; Dual Career Family; Employed Women; Family Life; Family Problems; Fathers; Homemakers; *Mothers; Parent Participation; *Parent Role; *Stress Variables; *Well Being

ABSTRACT

Consequences of mothers' participation in child care (interaction and child-care tasks) on 160 Caucasian middle-class fathers and mothers were examined in an interview study of parents of kindergarten and fourth grade children. In half of the families, mothers were employed. Three forms of mothers' participation were examined in relation to two categories of consequences: role strain and well-being. Role-strain items referred to immediate and specific problems such as time and energy constraints and role conflicts. Well-being items assessed self-esteem, life satisfaction, and quality of experience in the parental and marital roles. In general, relationships among mothers' participation and both categories of consequences were stronger in dual-earner families. In these families, mothers' role strain was not consistently related to mothers' participation. In contrast, fathers' role strain was correlated with mothers' participation, especially proportional interaction time. The more mothers did, relative to fathers, the less role strain fathers reported. With respect to well-being consequences, for fathers, increased mothers' participation was associated with decrements in feelings of involvement in the role of parent but gains in assessments of the marriage. The opposite pattern emerged among mothers. Increased maternal participation was associated with more positive feelings in the role of mother and less positive feelings in the marital role. (Author/RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED262860

MOTHERS' PARTICIPATION IN CHILD CARE:

PATTERNS AND CONSEQUENCES

Rosalind C. Barnett
and
Grace K. Baruch

1984

The research reported here was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (MH 34225) and received additional funding from the Henry A. Murray Center of Radcliffe College.

PS 015065

WORKING PAPER
NO. 137

Wellesley College
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley, MA 02181

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Rosalind C. Barnett
Grace K. Baruch
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

Consequences of mothers' participation in child care (interaction and child-care tasks) on 160 Caucasian middle-class fathers and mothers were examined in an interview study of parents of kindergarten and fourth grade children. In half of the families mothers were employed. Three forms of mothers' participation were examined in relation to two categories of consequences: role strain and well-being. Role-strain items referred to immediate and specific problems such as time and energy constraints and role conflicts. Well-being items assessed self-esteem, life satisfaction, and quality of experience in the parental and marital roles. Analyses were conducted for the sample as a whole, and separately for families with employed and non-employed mothers.

In general, relationships among mothers' participation and both categories of consequences were stronger in dual-earner families. In these families, mothers' role strain was not consistently related to mothers' participation. In contrast, fathers' role strain was correlated with mothers' participation, especially proportional interaction time. The more she did relative to him, the less role strain he reported.

With respect to well-being consequences, for fathers, increased mothers' participation was associated with decrements in feelings of involvement in the role of parent but gains in assessments of the marriage. The opposite pattern emerged among mothers. Increased maternal participation was associated with more positive feelings in the role of mother and less positive feelings in the marital role.

The focus of this paper is on mothers' participation in child care and its consequences for fathers and mothers. It has long been assumed that child-rearing is mothers' natural job; thus few efforts have been addressed to examining the extent and pattern of mothers' participation (Goldberg, 1981; Lawson & Ingleby, 1974; Zaslow, Pedersen, Suwalsky, Cain, Anderson & Fivel, 1982). It has also been assumed that caring for children is associated with maternal psychological well-being; hence, few studies have explored relationships between maternal participation and well-being. Recent research on fathers' participation in child-care indicates that diverse forms of participation may have different consequences, and that the consequences may not be the same for mothers and fathers (Baruch & Barnett, 1984). In this study of mothers' participation, several forms of participation are examined to determine the extent and pattern of maternal participation and to examine the effects of each form on mother's and father's well-being. Further, the question of whether these effects are similar in families with employed and non-employed mothers is addressed (Bell, 1983; Goldberg, 1981;Kessler & McCrae, 1981; Ross, Marowosky & Huber, 1983; Yogev & Brett, 1983; Zaslow et al., 1982). Data reported here are from a larger study of parents' participation (Baruch & Barnett, 1984) and its consequences for children.

The literature on fathers' suggests that there are both costs and benefits associated with fathers' involvement in the family. It may well be that mothers' participation also results in both positive and negative consequences. Further, the magnitude and direction of the effcts may differ for mothers and fathers. For example, Yogev and Brett (1983) report that

employed mothers were higher in marital satisfaction when they felt their husbands were doing their "fair share" of family work. However, men's marital satisfaction was associated with their perceiving their wives as doing more than their fair share. Moreover, data on fathers from the larger study, as well as recent reviews (Lamb, forthcoming; Radin & Russell, 1983) indicate that the consequences of participation vary according to the domain of life, e.g., the parenting role versus the marital role. In the present study consequences are examined separately, for mothers and fathers, for the roles of parent and spouse.

It is likely that the effects of mothers' participation will be experienced more strongly by both parents in dual-earner families. Employed wives may feel more responsible for their husbands' level of involvement and thus may react more than non-employed mothers to negative as well as positive effects. It is highly possible that the costs of mothers' participation may be felt more strongly by fathers, particularly in families with employed wives. In such families, fathers may be "forced" to participate. Lamb (1984) argues that when a father has free choice about his role, the consequences of his participation are likely to be more positive.

The literature on fathers' participation also suggests that consequences may differ for two categories of variables assessing well-being, role strain versus more global indices, such as life satisfaction and well-being (Barucn & Barnett, 1984). (Role strain refers to immediate, more specific experiences such as conflict). In the present study, specific strains, such as, time pressures and role conflicts, and more global aspects of well-being were

examined separately.

Based on the literature on parents' participation, the following three major distinctions are included in the present study:

1. Absolute versus propoportional time. Absolute time refers to the number of hours the mother spends with the child. Proportional time refers to that proportion of the total amount of time spent with the child by both parents that the mother spends.

2. Interaction versus tasks. Interaction refers to time spent with the child; tasks refers to specific child-care activities done with or for the child , e.g., cleaning the child's room; supervising the morning routine. The primary focus is accomplishing the designated task, although interaction may occur.

3. Solo versus joint participation. Solo participation refers to interaction or tasks that are performed when the mother is in sole charge; joint participation refers to interaction or tasks where both parents are together.

The study to be reported here examines many of these complexities as they pertain to mothers' participation in child care. The sample consisted of 168 intact families from one school system in the Greater Boston Area. The sample design is shown in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Method

Subjects

Subjects were mothers and fathers of 160 kindergarten and fourth-grade children and the children themselves. Subjects were drawn from the roster of families whose children were enrolled in the public school system of a mainly white and middle-class suburb in the Greater Boston Area. The sample was stratified so that at each grade level, half of the children were boys and half girls; within each of the four groups thus formed, half had employed mothers. Criteria for maternal employment were: working at least 17.5 hours per week for at least three months prior to being interviewed for this study. Non-employed mothers were defined as employed less than eight hours per week. All families were Caucasian, two-parent families; the child was the natural child of both parents. The sample was restricted to middle-class families, defined as the father's occupation being Class III or above on the Hollingshead Scale (1957). Data were collected from the fall of 1980 to the spring of 1981.

In accordance with school system requirements, families could not be contacted directly by the researchers. Letters were sent by the school to all families with a kindergarten or fourth-grade child. The study was

described to parents as concerning how mothers and fathers spend their time with respect to paid work, family work, and other activities, and how their patterns are related to children's attitudes about the roles of men and women. Interested parents completed an enclosed response card and provided the project with their telephone numbers.

Families who responded positively were categorized into four groups by sex and grade of their child; within each group the respondents were further classified by the mother's employment status. Within each of the eight groups thus formed, potential families were assigned random numbers. Families were contacted by telephone in order of random number by a member of the research team, who determined the father's occupation. This procedure was used to fill all but two cells, for which insufficient response cards were received. The school system then granted the investigators permission to contact potential families by telephone; this procedure yielded enough families to fill the remaining two cells.

Because of the procedure used, only an estimate of the response rate is possible; it was approximately 40% of those on the roster. For the same reason, differences between families participating and those refusing could not be studied but are unlikely to be demographic, given the homogenous nature of the parent population. It is possible that families in which fathers participated the least were the most likely to refuse, given the current social desirability of fathers' involvement.

Procedure

Mothers and fathers were interviewed in their homes for approximately two hours by a team consisting of a male and a female staff member. In accordance with Russell's (1978) recommendation, parents were interviewed jointly about the extent of their separate and joint participation in child care and home chores, in paid employment, and in other activities. Demographic data about the family were also obtained jointly. Each parent was then interviewed in a separate room by a same-sex interviewer to obtain data on marital and parental role strain and well-being. Finally, a questionnaire packet was left with each parent to be filled out independently and returned by mail; the packet included the measure of self-esteem. Each parent received $5 for participating.

Measures of Mothers' Participation

1. Total interaction time. Parents jointly used a chart devised for this study to indicate for five typical week days and for two typical weekend days (i.e., one typical week), the hours during which the target child and each parent were home and awake; they then indicated the nature of the child-parent interaction that typically occurred during each of those hours. Hours during which the child was at home and awake and one or both parents

were at home were coded jointly by parents and interviewer for level of interaction. Three levels of interaction were described to parents:

Level 1: No interaction: "Parent and child are not involved together. Each is engaged in independent activity with no interaction."

Level 2: Intermittent interaction: "Parent and child each are doing their own thing, aware of each other's activities, and interacting periodically."

Level 3: Intensive interaction: "Parent and child are actively involved together, as in doing homework, playing a game, being engaged in a project."

Parents reported only a small number of hours in which they were at home yet unavailable to the child (Level 1 interaction). Therefore, Level 1 scores were omitted from further analyses.

Intermittent (level 2) and intensive (level 3) interaction were combined into a total interaction score for two reasons. First, empirical examination of correlation patterns showed that the combined variable was more powerful. Second, the distinction between the levels, although conceptually clear to both parents and researchers, was not a good match to real life interactions. For example, conversations held while a parent was chauffering a child were experienced as intensive interaction yet technically were intermittent. Mothers' total interaction time, an absolute measure, was one of the three maternal participation variables examined in this study. (See Table I for definitions of the three maternal participation variables examined in this paper.)

Insert Table 1 about here

2.Proportional interaction time. Proportional interaction time was defined as the number of hours the mother spent per week in intermittent and intensive interaction divided by the total hours both parents spent in such interaction. Mothers' proportional interaction time was the second participation variable included in the analyses.

3.Child-care tasks. A second instrument used to measure mothers' participation was a checklist of 11 child-care tasks, modified in pilot work from Baruch and Barnett (1981). For each task, parents jointly were asked to estimate what percent of the time it was done by the mother alone, by the parents together, and by the father alone (0-20%; 20-40%; etc.). The 11 tasks were: take to birthday party; take to doctor/dentist; go to teacher conference; supervise morning routine; clean up room; spend special time at bedtime; take to or from lessons; buy clothes; take on outing (museum, park); supervise personal hygiene; stay home, or make arrangements for care, when child is sick. In the scoring, a "1" was assigned to 0-20% time, a "2" to 20-40%, etc. The mean time mothers spent doing child-care tasks alone constituted the third maternal participation variable.

Responsibility, defined as "remembering, planning, and scheduling," was assessed for the 11 child-care tasks. Overall, mothers reported very high levels of responsibility; fathers, in contrast, reported very low levels.

Because of the constricted range, this variables was omitted from further analyses.

In sum, on the basis of exploratory data analysis and conceptual considerations, three variables reflecting major dimensions of mothers' participation were selected for use in later analyses. These were mothers': total interaction time; proportional interaction time; and proportion of child-care tasks performed without the father.

Measures of Consequences of Mothers' Participation

Role-strain consequences. Four groups of role-strain consequences were assessed for each parent. The first group concerned perceived time and energy problems. Each parent rated on a 1-4 scale (from not at all to very much) the degree to which they were bothered by lack of time/energy for each of the following:(a) family; (b) work/career; (c) self; (d) spouse; and (e) friends.

Second, a set of open-ended questions inquired about work/family conflicts for oneself and one's spouse. Coding on a 1-4 scale (1=no conflict; 4=considerable conflict) yielded a maximum of four scores; two for self (my work conflicts with family; my family responsibilities conflict with work); and two analagous scores for perceptions of the spouse's conflicts.

A third group of role-strain variables assessed parents' satisfaction with three indicators of time spent with children and on chores. Each parent

indicated separately whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with : (a) the amount of time they were spending with children and on chores; (b) the amouunt of time their spouse was spending with children and on chores; and (c) the amount of time they thought their spouse wanted them to spend with children and on chores.

Fourth, each parent's overall satisfaction with both the spouse's work schedule and overall time allocation was assessed. Each parent also rated her or his perception of the spouse's attitude toward her or his time allocation.

Well-being consequences. Eight well-being consequences were assessed for each parent. With respect to the parental role, fathers and motners rated: (a) sense of involvement with the child (7-point scale); (b) sense of competence as a parent (4-point scale); and (c) satisfaction, i.e., attitude toward being a parent (7-point scale; 1=very positive to 7= very negative).

Three aspects of the marital relationship were assessed: (a) overall marital satisfaction (7-point scale); (b) sense of equity (7-point scale); and (c) evaluation of how good a parent the spouse is (7-point scale).

Results

Description of the Sample

The mean age of mothers was 39.38 years, and of fathers, 41.11. Of the

80 employed mothers, 39 worked from 17.5 hours to 29 hours per week; 37 worked 30 or more hours per week; four had lowered their work hours below the 17.5 hours between the telephone screening and the interview. The mean occupational prestige level (Siegel, 1971) of employed mothers was 47.6, which is the level assigned to a bookkeeper and to the owner of a real estate agency. The mean occupational prestige level of fathers was 55.78, the level assigned to an accountant and to a social worker. The mean educational level of both mothers and fathers corresponded to a college degree. Mean family income was in the mid $30,000 range for the total sample. Fathers' mean income was approximately $28,000; that of employed wives was $7,600, reflecting the high proportion of part-time workers among women, the differential lower pay scales for women's jobs, and the tendency for married women, especially those employed by their husbands, to underreport their income.

Of the 160 families, six had one child, 87 had two children, 47 had three children, and 20 had four or more children. With respect to child-care load, a variable that combines number and ages of children, only 18 percent of the families had at least one child under three years of age; 62 percent had at least one child between three and eight years of age; and the remaining 21 percent had no child younger than nine years of age.

Since the effects of maternal participation were examined separately for employed and non-employed mothers, the two groups of families were compared on a variety of demographic and family structure measures in order to detect differences that might affect the findings. I tests indicated that the only

significant difference was in fathers' income, with means estimated at $16,000 for fathers with employed wives and $29,000 for fathers with non-employed wives ($t(157)=11.18$, $p<.001$). There were no significant differences in: total family income, number of children, occupational prestige of husband, number of hours per week the husband worked. Unfortunately, since the main study was designed primarily to investigate fathers' participation, no measures of attitudes toward the female role were included.

Mothers' Participation Variables

The intercorrelations between the three mothers' participation variables are shown in Table 2. All three variables are correlated

---

Insert Table 2 about here

---

positively and significantly, however, the correlations are moderate, ranging from $r=.30$ to $r=.52$. Thus, the measures tap relatively independent aspects of participation.

As shown in Table 3, compared to employed mothers, non-employed mothers

Insert Table 3 about here

spend significantly more hours per week in total interaction time (M= 41.87, SD=9.45 and M=49.03, SD=11.4, respectively, p (.001) and proportional interaction time (M=.58, SD=.07 and M=.63, SD=.63, p(.001, respectively). For purposes of comparison, the fathers in this study spent an average of 29.48 hours per week (SD=8.07) in total interaction time. Mothers in both groups did more than half of the total interaction time spent by both parents. There were no differences between the two groups of mothers with respect to the proportion of child-care tasks they performed without their husbands' participation. Both groups of mothers reported that on average they performed the 11 child-care tasks alone about 65% of the time. Subsequent analyses were conducted separately for employed and non-employed mothers.

Role-Strain Consequences

Differences with respect to mean scores on the role-strain consequences for families with employed and non-employed mothers were assessed by t tests. For the fathers, the only significant difference was that those with employed wives were less satisfied with the amount of time their wives were spending with thier children (M=1.62, SD=.49 and M=1.86, SD=.35, respectively; t(157)=3.61, p(.001).

Differences in role-strain scores were greater for the mothers. (Table 4 presents the data.) Compared to non-employed mothers, employed mothers complained

---

Insert Table 4 about here

---

more of having too little time for friends, but were more satisfied with their husbands' work schedules. They were also less satisfied with the time fathers were spending with the children and were more likely to perceive their spouses as wanting them to spend more time with the children. They also perceived their husbands as less satisfied with their (the mothers') overall time allocation than did non-employed wives.

The relationship between mothers' participation and role-strain consequences were examined by zero-order correlations. In general, the effects of mothers' participation on the fathers were more numerous and stronger than on the mothers themselves. (Only correlations reaching the .01 level will be discussed in the text).

Families with employed mothers. As can be seen in Table 5, with only one exception, none of the three mothers'

Insert Table 5 about here

---

participation variables correlated at the .01 level with any of the mothers' role-strain consequences. Mothers who performed more child-care tasks alone were less likely to report too little time for their families (r=-.31, p<.01). Strikingly, for employed mothers, there were no significant associations between the amount of time they spent in interaction with their child and any of the role-strain variables.

In contrast, several fathers' role-strain variables were significantly associated with mothers' participation, particularly with proportional interaction time, as can be seen in Table 6. The more time the mother spent,

---

Insert Table 6 about here

---

relative to the father, in interaction with the child, the more satisfied he was with her work schedule (r=.44, p<.001), with her overall time allocation (r=.34, p<.001), and the more satisfied he perceived his wife to be with his overall time allocation (r=.40, p<.001). Interestingly, he perceived that she was dissatisfied with the amount of time he spent with the children (r=-.28, p<.01). In sum, the more time she spends, relative to him, in interaction with the children, the more satisfied he is .

Families with non-employed mothers. For non-employed mothers, only one correlation reached the .01 level, namely, the more child-care tasks she

performed alone, the more dissatisfied she was with the amount of time her husband spent with the children (r=-.38, p<.001). (The data are displayed in Table 7.) It may be that non-employed mothers expect to do most of

---

Insert Table 7 about here

---

the interacting with the child, so that an imbalance between her and her husband in that form of participation does not result in feelings of dissatisfaction. However, with respect to child-care tasks, unequal performance may make her feel unappreciated. Moreover, she may have greater expectations for help from him regarding specific tasks.

With respect to the fathers, again only one correlation reached the .01 level of significance. (See Table 8.) The more

---

Insert Table 8 about here

---

child-care tasks a non-employed mother does by herself, the less likely her husband is to complain about not having enough time for himself (r=-.27, p<.01).

Well-Being Consequences

As can be seen in Table 9, there were no significant

Insert Table 9 about here

---

significant differences between the employed and non-employed mothers with respect to scores on any of the eight well-being consequence variables. Both groups report similar levels of life satisfaction ($\underline{M}$=3.44, $\underline{SD}$=1.12, and $\underline{M}$=3.61, $\underline{SD}$1.14, for employed and non-employed mothers, respectively), and self-esteem ($\underline{M}$=3.27, $\underline{SD}$=.48, and $\underline{M}$=3.26, $\underline{SD}$=.51, for employed and non-employed mothers, respectively). With respect to the parental role and the marital role, well-being scores were also similar.

As shown in Table 10, there were no significant differences

Insert Table 10 about here

---

between husbands of employed and non-employed wives on any of the eight well-being consequence variables.

The relationship between mothers' participation and well-being consequences were examined by means of zero-order correlations.

Employed mothers. Overall, employed mothers' participation had little correlation with mothers' well-being consequence measures. (See Table 11.) Mothers with high

---

Insert Table 11 about here

---

proportional interaction time were high in sense of involvement with the target child (r=.27, p <.01). Mothers who did a high proportion of child-care tasks alone, were critical of their husbands as fathers (r=-.46, p <.001). The pattern of benefits in the parental role and tensions in the marital role accompanying high maternal participation was similar to that found among fathers in this study with respect to paternal participation (Baruch & Barnett, 1984).

Fathers with employed wives. In general, mothers' participation variables had more frequent and stronger correlations with fathers' well-being consequences than with those for the mothers themselves. This pattern was particularly evident among two-earner families. (The data are presented in Table 12.) The strongest

Insert Table 12 about here

pattern of correlations was between mothers' proportional interaction time and fathers' well-being consequences. The higher the mother's proportion of interaction relative to the father's, the greater his sense of equity, i.e., the more benefited he felt in the marriage (r=.38, p(.001). At the same time, there was a negative relationship between a mother's proportional interaction time and her husband's feelings about himself, both in general and in the role of parent. More specifically, his sense of involvement with the child decreased with her participation (r=-.29, p(.01), as did his self-esteem (r=-33, p(.01).

The more total interaction time the mother spent, the higher was her husband's rating of her as a mother (r=.29, p(.01). Interestingly, the opposite pattern was found for the fathers; the more the fathers did, the more critical they were of their wives as mothers. Finally, the more child-care tasks she performed without him, the lower was the father's sense of involvement with the child (r=-.39, p(.001).

Thus, the findings reveal that mothers' participation was associated with both positive and negative effects on fathers; the more she participated, the more positively he felt about the marriage and the more negatively he felt about aspects of his role as parent and about himself in general. It is of course possible that fathers who are low in self-esteem and in their feelings about themselves as parents have wives who are more

participatory.

Non-employed mothers. As can be seen in Table 13, for

Insert Table 13 about here

---

non-employed mothers, the three forms of participation are not significantly correlated either with the general indices of well-being or with the indices of well-being in the parental role. However, with respect to the marital role, participation, especially proportional interaction time and child-care tasks showed consistently negative, albeit modest, correlations. Only one correlation reached the .01 level of significance; non-employed mothers who were high in proportional interaction time were more critical of their husbands as fathers ($r=.28$, $p<.01$).

Fathers with non-employed wives. As can be seen in Table 14, two of the mothers' participation variables were

---

Insert Table 14 about here

---

moderately and negatively correlated with fathers' sense of involvement with the child. The higher the non-employed mothers proportional interaction

time, the lower the fathers' sense of involvement (r=-.34, p<.001). The same relationship was found for mothers who did more child-care tasks alone (r=-.39, p<.001); the more they did, the lower was the fathers' sense of involvement.

Discussion and Conclusions

The most significant finding of this study is that the proportional forms of maternal participation, that is, the amount of time mothers' spend relative to fathers, in both interaction and child-care tasks, had the most powerful consequences, especially for fathers. These effects were most pronounced in dual-earner families. With respect to role-strain consequences, the more proportional interaction time an employed mother spent, the more satisfied her husband was with her work schedule, her overall time allocation, and the amount of time she spent with the children. Thus, for employed mothers, their proportional interaction time acts as a barometer for their husbands' degree of dissatisfaction. The more she does relative to him, the more satisfied he is; the less she does, the more dissatisfied. This finding supports the conclusion of Yogev and Brett (1983), that fathers' marital satisfaction is associated with their perceiving their wives as doing more than their "fair share" .

Employed wives who spend more time relative to their husbands in interaction and who do more child-care tasks alone, perceive correctly that their husbands are satisfied with their work schedules and with their overall time allocation. Interestingly, among both groups of mothers, those who were highly participatory were critical of the amount of time their husbands'

spent with the children. This finding supports Pleck's recent conclusion (forthcoming), that in two-earner couples, the wife's family adjustment and well being are related not to her doing too much child care and housework, but to her husband doing too little. The non-employed mothers in this study were also critical of the amount of time their husbands spent in chores. Employed mothers appear less critical, or perhaps, discount their dissatisfaction in the interest of harmony in the marriage.

With respect to well-being consequences, the effects on fathers were more pronounced than for mothers and were both negative and positive. Here again, the proportional forms of participation had more powerful effects. The more time a mother spent relative to her husband in interaction, and the more child-care tasks she did alone, the lower was his self-esteem and sense of involvement with the child, but the more benefited he felt in the marriage. The same pattern of findings emerged among fathers with non-employed wives. Perhaps fathers who are not participatory are responding to conflicting pressures. On the one hand, they may enjoy certain traditional benefits in their marriages; on the other, they may have doubts about how well they are fulfilling new expectations associated with the role of father.

For employed mothers, proportional interaction time was associated with higher sense of involvement with the child; performing child-care tasks alone was associated with heightened criticalness of spouses as fathers. The negative effects of mothers' participation on the marital role were more pronounced among non-employed mothers. These women may be especially

sensitive to the value of their role and may interpret their husbands' relative lack of participation as a sign of his devaluation. In a previous study, (Baruch, Barnett & Rivers, 1983), the well-being of non-employed women, but not employed women, was associated with husbands' participation in family work.

Thus, for fathers, increased mothers' participation was associated with decrements in his feelings in the role of parent but gains in assessments of the marriage. The opposite pattern emerged among mothers. Increased maternal participation was associated with more positive feelings in the role of mother and less positive feelings in the marital role.

References

Baruch, G.K. & Barnett, R.C. Fathers' participation in the care of their pre-school children. Sex Roles, 1981, 7, 1043-1054.

Baruch, G.K. & Barnett, R.C. Consequences of fathers' participation in family work: Parents' role strain and well-being, 1984a.

Baruch, G.K., Barnett, R.C. & Rivers, C. Lifeprints: New patterns of love and work for today's women. New American Library, 1984b.

Bell, D. Being a man: The paradox of masculinity. Lexington, MA: Lewis, 1983.

Goldberg, R.J. Adapting time budget methodology for child development research: Effects of family variables on allocation of time to child rearing activities and developmental outcomes. Paper presented at Society for Research in Child Development, Boston, April, 1981.

Hollingshead, A. Two-factor index of social position. New Haven, CT: Yale, 1957.

Kessler, R. & McRae, J.A. Jr. Trends in the relationship between sex and psychological distress: 1957-1976. American Sociological Review, 1981, 46, 443-452.

Lamb, M.E. Consequences of paternal involvement. In J.A. Levine, J.H. Pleck, M.E. Lamb & D. Klinman (Eds.), The future of fatherhood, forthcoming.

Lawson, A. & Ingleby, J.D. Daily routines of pre-school children: effects of age, birth order, sex and social class, and developmental correlates. Psychological Medicine, 1974, 4, 399-415.

Pleck, J.H. The consequences of "role overload." In J.H. Pleck, Working wives, working husbands. NY: Sage, forthcoming.

Radin, N. & Russell, G. Increased father participation and child development outcomes. In M.E. Lamb & A. Sagi (Eds.), Fatherhood and social policy. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1983.

Ross, C., Marowosky, J. & Huber, J. Dividing work, sharing work, and in-between: marriage patterns and depression. American Sociological Review, 1983, 48, 809-823.

Russell, G. The father role and its relation to masculinity, femininity, and androgyny. Child Development, 1978, 49, 1174-1181.

Siegel, P.M. Prestige in the American occupational structure. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Chicago, 1971.

Yogev, S. & Brett, J. Perceptions of the division of housework and child-care and marital satisfaction. Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1983.

Zaslow, M.J., Pedersen, F.A., Suwalsky, J.T.D., Cain, R.L., Anderson, B.J. & Firel, M. Maternal employment and family interaction: Impact during the first half-year of life. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1982.

Footnotes

1. The data reported in this paper were collected as part of a larger study designed to examine fathers' participation in family work and its consequences for children's sex-role development. The findings for the children are reported in Baruch and Barnett (1984a). The consequences of fathers' participation on fathers' and mothers' reports of role-strain and well-being are reported in Baruch and Barnett (1984b); the determinants of fathers' participation are reported in Barnett and Baruch (1984).

2. Given a cross-sectional design, it was of course not possible to disentangle cause and effect relationships. For analytic purposes, correlates of participation were construed as consequences on conceptual and common sense grounds.

Table 1

Definitions: The Three Major Mothers' Participation Variables

Variable	Operational Definition
Total interaction time	Number of hours per week the mother spends in intermittent and intensive interaction with child.
Proportional interaction time	Ratio: Time the mother spends per week in intermittent and intensive interaction divided by the total time both parents spend in such interaction.
Solo performance of child-care tasks	The mean proportion of the time the mother alone performs 11 child-care tasks.

Table 2

Mothers' Participation Variables by Maternal Employment Status: Means, Standard Deviations and T Tests

	Mothers' Employment Status			
	Employed		Non-Employed	
Participation Variable	M	SD	M	SD
Total interaction time	41.87	9.45	49.03	11.4[xxx]
Porportional interaction time	.58	.07	.63	.63[xxx]
Child-care tasks	3.47	.53	3.60	.50

xxx $p < .001$.

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlations Between Mothers' Participation Variables

	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Total interaction time	.52^{xxx}	.30^{xxx}
Proportional interaction time		.43^{xxx}

Note. $N = 160$.

^{xxx} $p < .001$.

Table 4

Mothers' Role-Strain Consequences by Maternal Employment Status: Means, Standard Deviations, and T Tests

	Maternal Employment Status			
	Employed		Non-Employed	
Role-Strain Consequences	M	SD	M	SD
Too little time or energy for:				
Family	1.97	.77	1.78	1.05
Career/Work	1.62	.72	1.73	.89
Self	2.15	.87	2.13	.89
Spouse	2.10	.79	2.16	.71
Friends	1.70	.70	1.49	.57[x]
Role conflicts: Spouse				
Work with family	1.64	.80	1.71	.86
Family with work	1.00	.00	1.01	.11
Role conflicts: Self				
Work with family	1.64	.81	1.00	.00
Family with work	1.57	.79	1.00	.00
Satisfaction with:				
Own time for children	1.46	.50	1.52	.53
Own time in chores	1.29	.46	1.39	.72
Spouse's time with children	1.48	.50	1.57	.52
Spouse's time in chores	1.38	.49	1.59	.72[x]

Table 4 cont'd

Role-Strain Consequences	Maternal Employment Status: Employed M	Employed SD	Non-Employed M	Non-Employed SD
Own work flexibility	5.82	1.42	.00	.00
Spouse's work schedule				
Spouse's overall time allocation	5.03	1.63	5.14	1.52
Perceived satisfaction of spouse regarding self's				
Time with children	1.56	.50	1.71	.48[x]
Time in chores	1.51	.50	1.60	.08
Overall time allocation	4.76	1.54	5.34	1.31[xx]

Note. N = 160.

[x] $p < .05$, [xx] $p < .01$.

Table 5

Intercorrelations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Role-Strain Consequences for Employed Mothers

Role-Strain Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables		
	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Too little time or energy for:			
Family	-.06	-.20[x]	-.31[xx]
Work	-.04	.04	-.03
Self	.03	-.00	.04
Spouse	-.05	-.02	-.01
Friends	.00	-.13	.11
Role conflicts: Self			
Work with family	-.04	-.17	-.25[x]
Family with work	.08	.07	-.07
Role conflicts: Spouse			
Work with family	-.04	-.02	.10
Family with work	.03	.01	-
Satisfaction with:			
Own time with children	-.03	.17	.07
Own time in chores	-.03	.17	-.02

Table 5 Cont'd

Role-Strain Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables: Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Spouses' time with children	.07	.00	-.24[x]
Spouse's time in chores	-.06	.11	.03
Own work flexibility	.08	.23[x]	.04
Spouse's work schedule	-.10	-.25[x]	-.03
Spouse's overall time allocation	.06	-.02	-.19[x]
Perceived satisfaction of spouse regarding self's:			
Time with children	.13	-.18	.18
Time in chores	.09	.05	-.10
Overall time allocation	.13	.23[x]	-.19[x]

Note. N = 80.

[x] $p < .05$. [xx] $p < .01$. [xxx] $p < .001$.

Table 6

Intercorrelations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Role-Strain Consequences for Fathers with Employed Wives

Role Strain Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables: Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Too little time or energy for:			
Family	.04	.03	-.00
Work	-.07	-.16	-.07
Self	-.12	-.14	-.11
Spouse	-.11	-.13	-.13
Friends	-.04	-.28^{xx}	-.02
Role conflicts: Self			
Work with family	-.21^{x}	-.08	-.21^{x}
Family with work	-.04	-.08	-.09
Role conflicts: Spouse			
Work with family	-.15	-.18	-.25^{x}
Family with work	-.15	-.14	.10
Satisfaction with:			
Own time with children	-.10	-.19^{x}	-.07
Own time in chores	-.12	-.16	-.09
Spouse's time with children	.02	.23^{x}	-.20^{x}
Spouse's time in chores	-.19	.05	-.12
Own work flexibility	-.10	-.25^{x}	-.26^{x}

Table 6 cont'd

Role Strain Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables: Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Spouse's work schedule	.08	.44^{xxx}	.21
Spouse's overall time allocation	.15	.34^{xxx}	.12
Perceived satisfaction of spouse regarding self's:			
Time with children	-.21^{x}	-.28^{xxx}	-.20^{x}
Time in chores	-.23^{x}	-.08	-.12
Overall time allocation	.25^{x}	.40^{xxx}	.12

Note. $N = 80$.

^{x} $p < .05$. ^{xx} $p < .01$. ^{xxx} $p < .001$.

Table 7

Intercorrelations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Role-Strain Consequences for Non-Employed Mothers

	Mothers' Participation Variables		
Role Strain Consequences	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Too little time or energy for:			
Family	-.04	.02	.13
Work	.12	.05	-.06
Self	.01	-.11	-.08
Spouse	.07	.03	.02
Friends	-.02	-.16	-.09
Role Conflicts: Spouse			
Work with family	-.02	.06	-.04
Family with work	.08	.08	-.17
Satisfaction with:			
Own time with children	-.02	.01	-.03
Own time in chores	NA		-.03
Spouse's time with children	.06	-.14	.38^{xxx}
Spouse's time in chores	-.11	-.10	-.22^{x}
Spouse's work schedule	.21^{x}	.12	-.06

Table 7 cont'd

Role Strain Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables: Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Spouse's overall time allocation	.21*	.12	-.16
Perceived satisfaction of spouse regarding self's:			
Time with children	-.01	.10	.05
Time in chores	-.05	.04	-.04
Overall time allocation	.14	.19*	-.00

Note. $N = 80$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 8

Intercorrelations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Role-Strain Consequences for Fathers with Non-Employed Wives

	Mothers' Participation Variables		
Role Strain Consequences	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Too little time or energy for:			
Family	-.25[x]	.14	.03
Work	.05	.02	-.11
Self	-.19	-.04	-.27[xx]
Spouse	-.05	.15	.13
Friends	-.12	-.18	-.13
Role conflicts: Self			
Work with family	-.09	.04	-.04
Family with work	-.03	-.01	-.17
Satisfaction with:			
Own time with children	-.17	-.10	-.05
Own time in chores	-.00	-.20[x]	-.22[x]
Spouse's time with children	.13	.20[x]	-.14
Spouse's time in chores	.05	-.04	-.02
Own work flexibility	.11	-.11	-.04
Spouse's overall time allocation	.10	-.06	-.11

Table 8 cont'd

Role-Strain Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables: Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
Perceived satisfaction of spouse regarding self's			
Time with children	.00	-.16	-.14
Time in chores	.06	-.03	-.02
Overall time allocation	-.01	-.10	-.11

Note. N = 80.

^{x} $p < .05$. ^{xx} $p < .01$. ^{xxx} $p < .001$.

Table 9

Mothers' Well-Being Consequences by Maternal Employment Status: Means, Standard Deviations and T Tests

	Maternal Employment Status				
	Employed		Non-Employed		
Well-Being Consequences	M	SD	M	SD	
General					
Life Satisfaction	5.44	1.12	5.61	1.14	n.s.
Self-esteem	3.27	.48	3.26	.51	n.s.
Parental Role					
Involvement	6.11	.88	6.27	1.05	n.s.
Competence	3.04	.67	3.22	.65	n.s.
Satisfaction	6.22	.90	6.18	.92	n.s.
Marital Role					
Satisfaction	5.91	1.16	6.14	.98	n.s.
Equity	3.92	.76	4.01	.74	n.s.
Rating of spouse as a father	3.46	.70	3.46	.69	n.s.

Table 10

Fathers' Well-Being Consequences by Maternal Employment Status: Means, Standard Deviations and T Tests

	Maternal Employment Status				
	Employed		Non-Employed		
Well-Being Consequences	M	SD	M	SD	
General					
Life satisfaction	5.52	1.02	5.59	1.14	n.s.
Self-esteem	3.43	.53	3.46	.49	n.s.
Parental Role					
Involvement	5.38	1.30	5.50	1.13	n.s.
Competence	3.04	.67	3.22	.65	n.s.
Satisfaction	6.24	.96	6.46	.69	n.s.
Marital Role					
Satisfaction	6.04	1.04	6.13	.93	n.s.
Equity	4.33	.83	4.19	.62	n.s.
Rating of spouse as a mother	3.44	.68	3.59	.59	n.s.

Note. N = 160.

Table 11

Zero-Order Correlations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Mothers' Well-Being Consequences: Employed Mothers

Mothers' Well-Being Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables		
	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
General			
Life satisfaction	-.04	.11	.06
Self-esteem	-.05	-.21^{x}	-.05
Parental Role			
Involvement	.11	.27^{xx}	-.02
Competence	.01	.07	-.06
Satisfaction	-.03	.16	-.08
Marital Role			
Satisfaction	-.04	-.02	-.12
Equity	-.11	-.03	-.02
Rating of spouse as a father	.01	-.17	-.46^{xxx}

Note. $N = 80$.

^{x} $p < .05$. ^{xx} $p < .01$. ^{xxx} $p < .001$.

Table 12

Zero-Order Correlations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Fathers' Well-Being Consequences: Employed Mothers

Mothers' Well-Being Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables		
	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
General			
Life Satisfaction	-.17	.02	-.00
Self-esteem	-.06	-.33^{xx}	-.13
Parental Role			
Involvement	-.18	-.29^{xx}	-.39^{xxx}
Competence	.05	-.25^{x}	-.19
Satisfaction	.20^{x}	.17	-.11
Marital Role			
Satisfaction	.13	.07	-.16
Equity	.16	.38^{xxx}	-.03
Rating of spouse as a mother	.29^{xx}	.14 ^{x}	.09

Note: $N = 80$.

^{x} $p < .05$. ^{xx} $p < .01$.

Table 13

Zero-Order Correlations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Mothers' Well-Being Consequences: Non-Employed Mothers

Mothers' Well-Being Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables		
	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
General			
Life Satisfaction	-.03	.10	.02
Self-esteem	-.10	-.05	-.17
Parental Role			
Involvement	.15	.03	-.01
Competence	.14	.13	-.01
Attitude	-.07	.10	.16
Marital Role			
Satisfaction	.01	.15	-.18
Equity	-.09	-.19^{x}	-.18^{x}
Rating of spouse as a father	.07	-.22^{x}	-.28^{xx}

Note. $N = 80$.

$^{x}p < .05$. $^{xx}p < .01$.

Table 14

Zero-Order Correlations Between Mothers' Participation Variables and Fathers' Well-Being Consequences: Non-Employed Mothers

Fathers' Well-Being Consequences	Mothers' Participation Variables		
	Total Interaction Time	Proportional Interaction Time	Child-Care Tasks
General			
Life satisfaction	.12	.11	.00
Self-esteem	-.00	-.17	-.14
Parental Role			
Involvement	.13	-.34^{xxx}	-.39^{xxx}
Competence	.17	-.16	-.19^{x}
Satisfaction	.06	-.02	-.11
Marital Role			
Satisfaction	.02	.11	-.16
Equity	.12	.21^{x}	-.03
Rating of spouse as a mother	-.04	.10	.09

Note: $N = 80$.

^{x} $p < .05$, ^{xxx} $p < .001$.